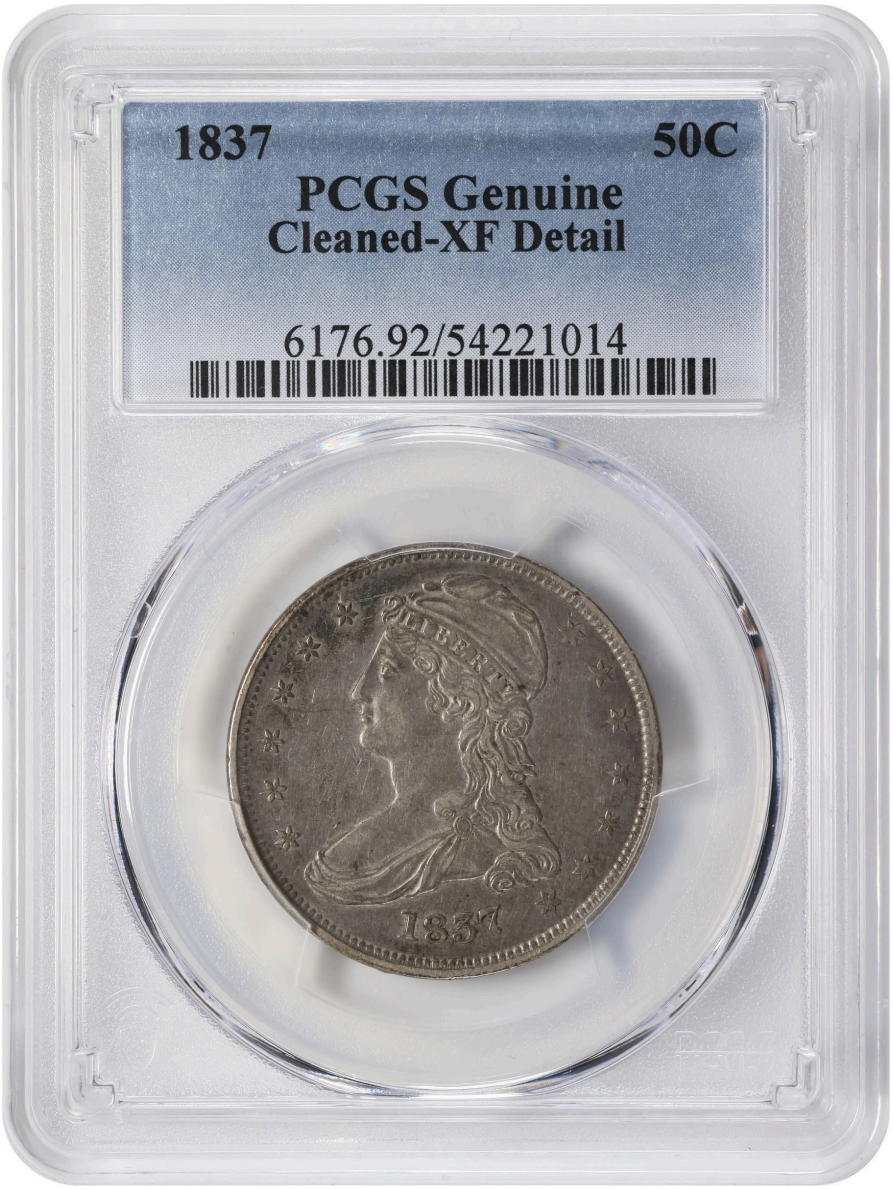
Koenings' Special Reeded Edge Half Newsletter #6

March 25, 2026

Dear Reeded Edge Half Collector:

Major Discovery

On February 11, 2026, I was the high bidder on the PCGS XF details 1837 GR-5 Reeded Edge Half from Stacks Bowers shown below:



1837 GR-5 PCGS XF details Obverse with no reverse rotation

1837 GR-5 PCGS XF details Reverse with no reverse rotation

Although Dick Graham lists 1837 GR-5 as a R-1 Rarity (over 1,000 known) in his 2012 book "A Registry of Die Varieties of Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836-1839", he also states on page 55 "When you find a GR-5, it comes reasonably well struck for the fourth use of the obverse die and the reverse **is usually rotated about 30 degrees counter clockwise**, with the Eagle's head and neck showing weakness." Because of that statement, I have been trying to find a Prime specimen that had basically 0 Degrees Rotation for at least 12 years.

This is a larger view of the 1837 GR-5 Reverse with No Rotation

The above photo is an obvious Very Early Strike as all the dentils are very sharp. When I spoke with Dick Graham on March 20, 2026, he agreed with me that it was an Very Early Strike of the first use of Reverse E for 1837 GR-5, showing weakness in the Eagle's head and neck. He also pointed out that later die stages became very mushy with the dentils disappearing. When he checked his notes, he noted that he had only seen **2 specimens** with NO ROTATION, they were an NGC AU58 and an NGC MS64.

Dick estimated that the shield was rotated maybe 5 degrees Counterclockwise. However, when you see later die stages in this document, you will see that the normal is probably over 30 degrees CCW.

1837 GR-5 PCGS XF details – Showing 4th Use of Obverse 2

Obverse 2 was used on 1837 GR-2, GR-3, GR-4 and finally on GR-5. Of all the 1837 Die Marriages, Obverse 2 has the 3 and 7 in the date, the closest at the top. When you draw a line from the Top of 3 in 183 to the closest point of Star 13, you will notice that the 7 appears to be tilted to left. Dick mentions in his book that there is recutting across the top and upper right side.

1837 GR-5, Typical Early Die Stage without die cracks (PRIME)

Dick describes the above shown reverse as "Prime- no cracks- clashed on right side between Eagle's body and right claw." You can see the shield is roatated approximately 30 degrees counterclockwise.

The above specimen was the best I could find that illustrates a Prime reverse. I do see the start of Stage a, where a crack starts at the rim opposite the tip of the left wing. I do not see the crack ending from T4 to the rim. You should also notice how the dentils are weaker on the left side of the coin.

1837 GR-5, Very Late Die Stage (Stage a)

Dick Graham describes Stage a as shown below:

1st crack = "Crack: rim- left wing tip – top 2 leaves- left leg- Olive branch end- T4 to rim."

2nd crack = "Crack: rim- base A1 – end Eagle's beak – neck above shield- top right wing- E3 to rim."

3rd crack = "Crack VLDS- from crack 2 above – down thru right wing to field below CA."

Conclusions

1837 GR-5 normally comes with a rotated reverse that is slightly more than 30 degrees counterclockwise and is Rated R-1 (over 1,000 known). The Prime die stage is extremely rare with only 3 specimens known, that have nearly 0 degrees rotation.

Now that I am semi-retired (my Newsletters are being emailed every other month), I had hoped to list my duplicates and offer them for sale. However, since November 2017, I have become a serious collector of die states. I am amazed at all of the unique discoveries I have made in the last 4 years alone. I thought this Special Newsletter was more important than several other studies I have been working on.

Readers, Please Look at your 1837 GR-5's

If you have an 1837 GR-5 that is Prime (without die breaks and with no rotation, let me know.

If you have an 1837 GR-5 that is without die breaks but has a 30 CCW rotation, let me know.

If you have an 1837 GR-5 that has a crack from the left wing tip to T4 and the rim, let me know.

If you have a VLDS 1837 GR-5 (Stage a), let me know.

If you have any questions on 1837 GR-5 email me at bustcoin1@verizon.net

Happy Hunting!

Best wishes,
Jim Koenings